

Western School Corporation's Return to In-Person Instruction Plan for the **2023-2024** School Year



Presented to the Western School Board on **June 20, 2023**

Opportunity for public comment was given during the meeting on **June 20, 2023**

Western School Board approved the plan with no changes on **June 20, 2023**



Western School Corporation strives to provide a safe, healthy learning environment for all students for the 2023-2024 school year. Changes to the traditional school structure were necessary for all students, families, staff, and community for the 2021-2022 school year. Some of those changes may need to continue for the 2023-2024 school as we continue to monitor and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Reopening Task Force met on July 22, 2021 to discuss our 2021-2022 reopening plan as we continue with in-person instruction, and limit our remote/distance learning to only those students with a documented medical condition where COVID-19 would prevent in-person instruction (see page 24). Our Reopening Task Force consisted of administrators, School Board Members, and teachers. Input was also again obtained from our Clinical Coordinator, head custodians, maintenance, and transportation department. Opportunity for public comment on our revised plan was made available during the public comment portion of our December 3, 2021, February 22, 2022, and the June 21, 2022 School Board Meetings where the plan was revised. Our original plan was based primarily on the Indiana Department of Education's reopening framework entitled, ["Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools \(IN-CLASS\)"](#). We also used information from the reopening framework published by the Georgia Department of Education entitled, ["Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools"](#), information from the Howard County Health Department, and information from other Indiana schools. In addition to the above, our Return to In-Person Instruction Plan for the 2021-2022 school year also includes information from the following: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>! <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-mitigation-toolkit.html> <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf>

Our plan has also been shared with the Howard County Health Department as the district's plan for the 2023-2024 school year and the district periodically updates the Howard County Health Department on our plan. The Howard County Health Department does not have to approve the plan put forth by the district and may not agree with any or all parts of the plan.

It is essential for Western School Corporation to work in unison with our staff, parents, students, and community to create a safe and effective learning environment for students and staff, while still providing our students with a quality education.

Western's Return to In-Person document serves to outline the precautionary measures and adjustments to be implemented as students and staff fully return to school for the 2023-2024 school year. The following pages are organized into sections related to the various aspects of school operations and are subject to change:

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Framework for Return to In-Person Instruction

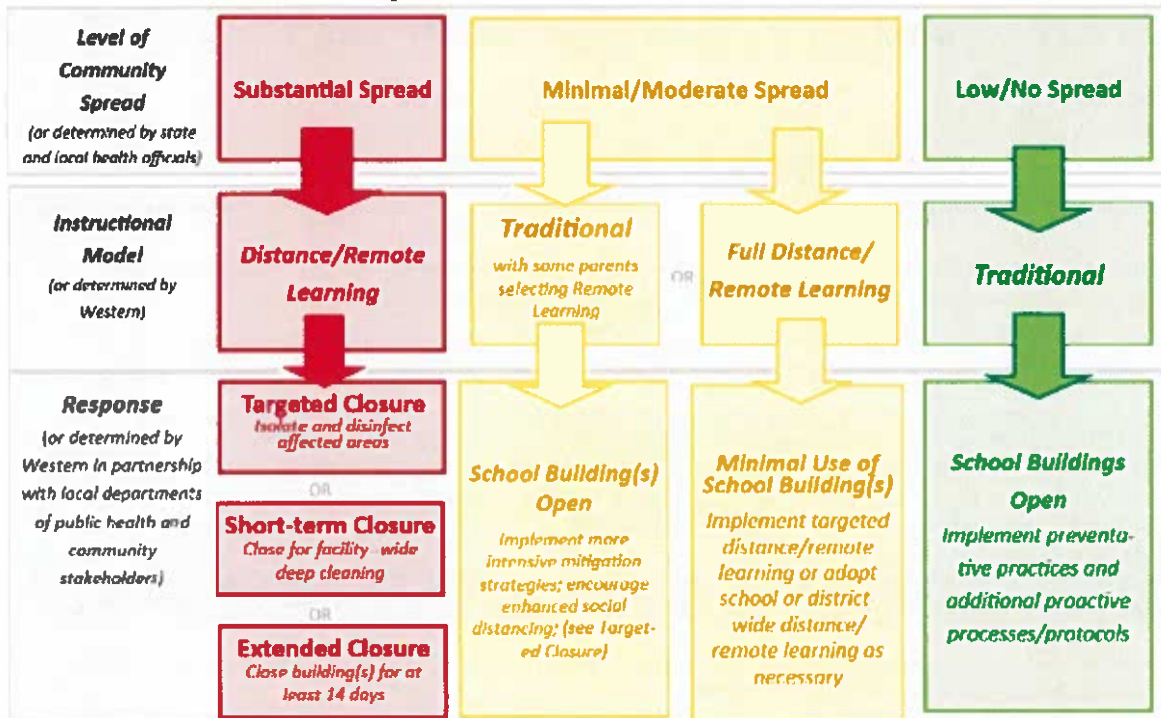
The following is a reopening framework that is based on the Georgia Department of Education's reopening document ["Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools"](#). Based on the current information from Howard County and the State of Indiana, the Western School District and nearby surrounding areas would align with the "Low/No Spread" and "Minimal/Moderate Spread" outlined below.

For Western's Return to In-Person plan for the start of the 2023-2024 school year (August 9, 2023), we will use the Low/No spread, which allows students to be on campus in a traditional setting.



Framework for Reopening

Upon reviewing the level of community spread throughout Western School District and the surrounding area, Howard County aligns within the "Low/No Spread" and "Minimal/Moderate Spread" outlined below.



Western School Corporation understands that the level of community spread may change and require adjustments to our initial plans, as illustrated above. Conditions will be monitored weekly with guidance from the state and Howard County Health Departments, and adjusted as needed. The Reopening Task Force was discontinued due to the elimination of many if not all COVID-19 protocols. This was voted on during the February 22, 2022 school board meeting.

Pre-K-12 Recommendations Based On Level of Community Spread from the Indiana Department of Health - NO LONGER IN PLACE BASED ON THE INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STATING WE NO LONGER HAVE TO QUARANTINE STUDENTS DUE TO EXPOSURE, ETC (FEB 23, 2022)

COVID-19 COUNTY METRICS AND GUIDELINES

The Indiana Department of Health has established a color-coded county map that measures weekly cases per 100,000 residents and the seven-day positivity rate for all tests completed. Each county is assigned a color based on the average of scores for the two metrics. The map is updated each Wednesday at www.coronavirus.in.gov. These guidelines are designed to inform local decision-making.

BLUE. The county has a point score of below 1.0 when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. There is low community spread.

- All general requirements are in effect
- Current activities continue
- Communities should evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine, and isolate

YELLOW. The county has a point score of 1.0 to 1.5 when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. There is moderate community spread.

- All general requirements are in effect
- Communities should evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine, and isolate
- Local public health officials, health care providers,

elected officials, school leadership and other key local leaders should convene regularly to discuss actions that could be implemented to decrease the spread of COVID in their communities

- Consider restrictions on the size of social gatherings and events

ORANGE. The county has a point score of 2.0 to 2.5 when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. Community spread is approaching high levels.

- All general requirements are in effect
- Communities should evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine, and isolate
- Local public health officials, health care providers,

elected officials, school leadership and other key local leaders should convene regularly to discuss actions that could be implemented to decrease the spread of COVID in their communities

- Strongly consider limiting the size of social gatherings and events

RED. The county has a point score of 3.0 or higher when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. Very high positivity and community spread.

- All general requirements are in effect
- Communities should evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine, and isolate
- Local public health officials, health care providers, elected officials, school leadership and other key local leaders must convene regularly to discuss actions that could be implemented to decrease the spread of COVID

in their communities

- Hospitals, long-term care and other congregate settings may impose visitation limits
- Social gatherings should be limited
- Capacity at all events should be limited to reduce virus spread
- Businesses should consider capacity restrictions and adhere to social distancing guidelines

Health Protocols

State statute gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (IC 20-34-3-9). In addition, the Howard County Health Department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (IC 16-41-9-1.6).

EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 23, 2022, SCHOOLS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED TO QUARANTINE STUDENTS DUE TO EXPOSURE. SCHOOLS ARE TO REVERT BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC PRACTICES

Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School

Students and employees will be trained to recognize the following COVID-19-related symptoms

- A fever of 100.4° F or higher when taken by mouth (or school board policy if threshold is lower)
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- Loss of taste or smell

Students and employees may be excluded from school if they:

- Test positive for COVID-19, or
- Exhibit one of the symptoms of COVID-19 based on CDC Guidance that is not otherwise explained

Self-Screening

All students and employees should self-screen **DAILY FOR ILLNESS** before coming to school.

Covid-19 Daily Self Checklist

It is recommended to review the COVID-19 Daily Self Checklist each day before reporting to school.

If you reply YES to any question from the questions below and/or have a fever, you may want to stay home and follow the steps below:

Parent/Student

Step 1: Call your school office to report an absence

Step 2: Call your health care provider for additional guidance

If you start feeling sick during the school day, report to the school nurse for evaluation.

Do you have a fever (temperature over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) without having taken any fever reducing medications?

- Yes
- No

Have you experienced any of the following symptoms such as:

Loss of Smell or Taste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No
Sore Throat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No
Uncontrolled Cough that causes difficulty breathing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No
Severe Headache	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No
Vomiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No
Diarrhea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No
Abdominal Pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No

Have you, or anyone you have been in close contact with, been diagnosed with COVID-19, or been placed on quarantine for possible contact with COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

Have you been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by a medical professional or a local public health official?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a known close contact within the household that is not tested or tested positive for COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a member of your household that is symptomatic that has not been tested or tested positive for COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

Have you stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with a person that is symptomatic or is a confirmed close contact and has not been tested or tested positive for COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

Preventative Measures

The number one way to prevent the spread of disease is for sick employees and students to stay home.

Some people can be infected with COVID-19, but show no signs of illness even though they are contagious, and can spread the disease to others. Employees or students may be present at

school, show no signs of illness, but be capable of transmitting the disease to others. In these situations, the three most important mitigation strategies are social distancing, frequent handwashing, and coughing and sneezing into the arm.

Handwashing and avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth are also important steps a person can take to avoid becoming sick or spreading germs to others. Western will continuously reinforce that employees and students need to wash their hands often, and if soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

Each building will reinforce the healthy habits regarding handwashing at key times, which includes:

- Start of the school day
- Before eating
- After using the restroom
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using shared equipment

Refill stations will be utilized in Western schools. Western will make available for purchase bottled water. Bottled water will also be available for purchase during lunch at each building. Water bottles brought to school need to be clearly labeled with the student's name.

On-site Testing for Staff Only

Effective February 23, 2022, on-site testing will no longer be available to staff.

Making Vaccinations Available to Students and Staff

In an effort to provide COVID vaccinations for our students and staff, Western will communicate with local Health Department and area shot clinics to students and staff, and allow release time as needed to attend for the vaccine.

Quarantining of Students and Staff

Schools are no longer required to quarantine students (February 23, 2022)

A TIME OF TRANSITION

A Time of Transition

- While universal case investigation and contact tracing during the initial phase of the pandemic was justified as the phases of the pandemic evolve, public health experts agree this degree of response is no longer optimal
- Indiana's cases and hospitalizations have fallen significantly in recent weeks as we move past the Omicron surge
- Although COVID-19 is not going away, we have tools available today that we didn't have two years ago, including vaccines and therapies
- As a result, we are making significant changes to our COVID-19 response operations that impact schools and local health departments



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Empowering the Public

- Focus on public education and messaging as we move toward endemic status
 - Educate on importance of vaccination, health strategies, protecting others who might be vulnerable
- Individuals who suspect a COVID-19 infection should
 - Get tested
 - Isolate to protect others (stay home when sick)
 - Rapidly notify their close contacts if they are positive
 - Seek healthcare if at higher risk



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Contact Tracing Update

Several scientific and other factors reduce the utility and feasibility of universal case investigation and contact tracing for each COVID-19 case.

- Large number of asymptomatic and less severe cases
 - Vaccination has helped with this
- Many infections are not identified by public health agencies because individuals were asymptomatic, didn't get tested or used an at-home test
- Omicron has a shorter incubation period
- Highest risk of transmission to others occurs prior to symptom onset and during the first few days of symptomatic illness—contact tracing usually occurs too late



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Contact Tracing Update

- IDOH recommends a shift from universal contact tracing, case investigation and exposure notification to a cluster or outbreak-based model
- Our centralized contact tracing center has shifted to a guidance and information center: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/quarantine-and-isolation-guidance-center/>
- No longer making outbound calls. Will end text messages to positive cases on March 1.
- Individuals have responsibility for notifying their close contacts, can use www.tellyourcontacts.org to send confidential texts or emails
- Consider increased mitigation strategies in congregate/special environments when clusters or outbreaks occur that are associated with new variants



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Students and Staff Wearing Masks (Cloth Face Coverings), Face Shields, and Other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Students and staff are not required to wear masks in any school setting (including buses). However, if a student or staff member would like to wear a face covering, they are more than welcome to do so.

Additional information from the CDC:

The CDC no longer recommends the wearing of masks on school buses or in school settings (February 2022)

Social Distancing in the School Environment

In order to maintain social distancing to the best of our ability, our Corporation may put in to place the following practices, for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Space between students may be increased during in-person instruction.
- Classes may be moved outdoors when possible.
- Desks/tables may be rearranged to increase space between students.
- Desks/tables may face in the same direction.
- Students may be asked to remain seated in the classroom as much as possible, and seats may be assigned.
- There may be a limit on the mixing of classes for activities or projects.
- Whole staff gatherings/meetings may continue virtually or with social distancing in place. Weekly PLC meetings may be by grade, subject, or PLC grouping in separate areas.
- We may minimize students traveling to different buildings to receive services.
- Employees traveling between buildings may be minimized.
- Visitors may be limited by necessity and may be screened prior to entering.
- Teachers will have access to extra materials for students who might need them in order to minimize sharing of high touch materials (pencils, art supplies, equipment, etc.) and items may be cleaned and disinfected between uses.

Contact Tracing Guidelines

Contact Tracing Update

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Return to School After Exclusion

The following information provided by the Indiana State Department of Health outlines when a student, faculty or staff member can return to school:

Positive Test:

- Stay home for 5 days - Return to school on Day 6 if asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and should wear a mask for Days 6-10 in classroom
 - Must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication and other symptoms improving
 - May require a negative test to return based on CDC/ISHD recommendation
- Students can resume extracurricular activities on Day 6
- If the parent would prefer the student to stay out of school for a full 10 days, this is allowable. However, the student will not be able to return to extracurricular activities until he or she returns.

Quarantine Options:

Students and staff are not required to quarantine. If a parent would like to have their child quarantined due to an exposure, the parent should contact the school principal to determine what steps will be taken with attendance.



GUIDANCE ON INTERPRETING COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

	RESULT	INTERPRETATION	RECOMMENDED ACTION
VIRAL TESTING: (testing for current infection)	Positive	<i>Most likely*</i> you DO currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give the virus to others.	<u>Stay home*</u> and follow CDC guidance on steps to take if you are sick. *If you are a healthcare or critical infrastructure worker, notify your work of your test result.
	Negative	<i>Most likely*</i> you DO NOT currently have an active COVID-19 infection.	If you have symptoms, you should keep monitoring symptoms and seek medical advice about staying home and if you need to get tested again. If you don't have symptoms, you should get tested again only if your medical provider and/or workplace tells you to. <u>Take steps to protect yourself and others.</u>
ANTIBODY TESTING: (testing for past infection with the virus)	Positive:	You <i>likely*</i> have HAD a COVID-19 infection.	You may be protected from re-infection (have immunity), but this cannot be said with certainty. Scientists are conducting studies now to provide more information. <u>Take steps to protect yourself and others.</u>
	Negative	You <i>likely*</i> NEVER HAD (or have not yet developed antibodies to) COVID-19 infection.	You could still get COVID-19. <u>Take steps to protect yourself and others.</u>
BOTH (antibody and viral testing)	Viral Positive, Antibody Positive:	<i>Most likely*</i> you DO currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give the virus to others.	<u>Stay home*</u> and follow CDC guidance on steps to take if you are sick. *If you are a healthcare or critical infrastructure worker, notify your work of your test result.
	Viral Positive, Antibody Negative	<i>Most likely*</i> you DO currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give the virus to others.	<u>Stay home*</u> and follow CDC guidance on steps to take if you are sick. *If you are a healthcare or critical infrastructure worker, notify your work of your test result.
	Viral Negative, Antibody Positive	You <i>likely*</i> have HAD and RECOVERED FROM a COVID-19 infection.	You may be protected from re-infection (have immunity), but this cannot be said with certainty. Scientists are conducting studies now to provide more information. You should get tested again only if your medical provider and/or workplace tells you to. <u>Take steps to protect yourself and others.</u>
	Viral Negative, Antibody Negative	You <i>likely*</i> have NEVER HAD a COVID-19 infection.	You could still get COVID-19. You should get tested again only if your medical provider and/or workplace tells you to. <u>Take steps to protect yourself and others.</u>

*No test is ever perfect. All tests occasionally result in false positive results (the test result should be negative because you DO NOT have COVID-19 but comes back positive) or false negative results (the test result should be positive because you DO have COVID-19, but comes back negative). Sometimes the results are not definitive (the result is unclear, and you don't know if it is positive or negative). For this and other reasons, results should always be reviewed by a healthcare professional.

† Viral tests are typically performed on respiratory specimens such as nasal swabs or throat swabs. They test for the presence of the virus, usually by testing for the virus's RNA or sometimes by testing for the virus's proteins ("antigen testing"). Antigen testing may be less sensitive than tests for the virus's RNA. If your antigen test is negative, please ask your healthcare provider if additional testing with an RNA test is needed and how long you should stay home.

‡ Antibody testing, also called "serologic testing" or "serology", is typically performed on a blood sample. Ideally, the results show whether you have ever been infected with the virus in the past or may be currently infected. Antibody tests check for antibodies that appear in the blood between about one and three weeks after symptom onset and may remain as long as a lifetime. Antibody tests may be positive while a person is infected. It is not yet known whether these antibodies protect against reinfection with the COVID-19 virus. For many other similar viruses, antibodies are protective for years or longer, but we do not yet have adequate data to know for COVID-19.

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/>

8/21/20

Medical Inquiries

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but given the nature of the pandemic more leeway has been given to districts/schools in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students than would otherwise be allowed. Schools are allowed to ask for additional information regarding COVID-19.

Clinical Space

Schools will utilize their nurse clinics for space related to all medical issues or concerns. Due to the steep decline in cases of COVID-19, schools are no longer required to have a separate space for those who are ill. Clinics will revert back to pre-pandemic clinic spaces while remaining as socially distant as possible.

If a student or staff member has a fever, for any reason, it is required that the student or staff member be fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for 24 hours before

returning to school.

Reporting Positive COVID-19 Cases

Teachers, administrators, staff, and students (parents/guardians) are no longer required to report any documented positive cases of COVID-19 to their school.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property

Teachers, administrators, staff, and students (parents/guardians) are no longer required to report any documented positive cases of COVID-19 to their school.

Immunizations

Immunization requirements at this time will remain unchanged. Western's Clinical Coordinator will continue to coordinate with the Howard County Health Department and state health department as needed.

Exchange of Resources to and from School

Each building principal will evaluate whether there needs to be a limit on the exchange of resources.

Student Expectations

Western Students are expected to adhere to all existing student handbook policies and procedures. In addition, students are to follow social distancing guidelines whenever possible.

In the event of a school closure, Western students are expected to continue the educational process through the combined support of teachers, instructional assistants, and technology. Western will utilize remote/distance learning during any school closure. Remote/distance learning is a change from the traditional eLearning practices as students will be expected to participate in the educational environment in real-time.

Western defines remote/distance learning as consisting of timely, active participation in the learning process via technology and video conferencing. Students will be expected to attend the remote/distance classroom using the same time structure of a traditional day of school. For example, a high school student will be expected to remotely connect to each class period to participate in real-time, live instruction provided by teachers and instructional assistants. Individual situations that may prevent a student from attending remote/distance learning sessions will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by building administration.

Western School Corporation Remote/Distance Learning for Students with a Documented Medical Condition Where COVID-19 Would Prevent In-person Instruction

Western School Corporation **may** offer a remote/distance learning option only to students with a documented medical condition where COVID-19 would prohibit the student from safely attending school on campus for the **2023-2024** school year. Students who are unable to attend in-person instruction will also not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular or co-curricular activities with the school. Parents of students with a documented medical condition will need to provide the school with a physician's statement stating the condition, and the reason the child needs the virtual option during registration, beginning **July 1, 2023**, and prior to the beginning of the second semester. Students qualifying for this option may receive their instruction in real-time through Zoom by following the class schedule, through recorded lessons, through Edmentum, or through guided teacher instruction. The remote/distance learning delivery method will be determined based on the student's grade level, the student's specific program, or the subject area being taught.

Remote Learning due to a Weather or Emergency Closing ****unless eLearning is utilized**

Remote Learning Due to a School Closure	
Grade Level	K-12
Schedule	To be utilized when school is closed/cancelled due to inclement weather, or emergency circumstances
Level of Support	Mildly Independent with Limited Scheduled Support
Time Commitment	K-5 (5 hours of instructional time) 6-12 (6 hours of instructional time)
Yearly Day Requirements	As Needed
Program Description	<p>K-5: Students may access live Zoom sessions for their classes and/or recorded videos of the live sessions, lesson materials are available on their teacher's specific Google Classroom pages</p> <p>6-12: Students may join live Zoom sessions for their classes and/or access recorded videos of the live sessions, lesson materials are available on their teacher's specific Google Classroom pages</p> <p>***See individual building plans</p>

Attendance Policy

Attendance bonuses and reward programs will be suspended to avoid encouraging employees and students to come to school when they are sick. A Western student absent from school due to COVID-19 related symptoms will be recorded as a student illness/medical absence.

Special Education

Western School Corporation will continue to conduct annual case reviews within the one- year timeline, regardless of school closure status. Case conference meetings with parents may be scheduled to review the provision of services and the educational progress of each student. These discussions will determine whether or not there is a need for an IEP revision.

Educational needs will be measured by considering:

- Whether the student participated in continuous learning opportunities provided by the school and district during the COVID-19 school building closure.
- Parent observations of the student's learning during the continuous learning opportunities provided by the school.
- Teacher observations of the student's learning in the continuous learning opportunities provided by the school.
- Whether there were services identified in the student's IEP prior to the school closure that the school or district was unable to provide during the building closure due to restrictions on in-person services.
- Whether the student continued making progress toward meeting his/her IEP Goals.
- Whether the student experienced any regression during the period of school building closure.

Future Services/Compensatory Services

Western School Corporation will be required to make an individualized determination as to whether compensatory services are needed under applicable standards and requirements. This does not mean that the school must immediately offer compensatory services to all students with IEPs; rather, it requires the case conference committee to lead a discussion on the educational needs of the student, including the potential loss of skills. Based on these individual needs, the CCC may consider the appropriateness of collecting data for an agreed-upon time following the student's return to school and subsequently reconvening to discuss the need for future services at that time.

Transition IEPs

Transition assessments will continue to be updated annually. When updating transition assessments, teachers of record (TORs) may conduct assessments remotely or in person. Assessments may be administered prior to or during the meeting. In all cases, assessment information will be documented within the Summary of Findings utilizing the SPIN method -Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs. Transition services will be created with both in-person and remote ways to accomplish objectives and goals to accommodate for the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation.

Evaluations

Requirements for evaluations remain unchanged.

Medically Fragile Students

The determination of the services to be provided must be made by the CCC (Case Conference Committee) based upon the individual student's medical and educational needs. Special education and related services determined by the CCC for a student with a physician's statement could be provided online or in a remote instructional format, through instructional telephone calls, or through other curriculum-based instructional activities (511 IAC 7-42-10). If the services are to be delivered through online or remote/distance instruction, technological competency and the need for additional assistive technology will be considered.

Homebound Services

Students who were receiving services in a homebound placement pursuant to their IEP will remain in that placement until the CCC determines that a different placement is appropriate.

Homebound Timelines

The CCC will continue to reconvene at least every 60 instructional days (this instructional day count includes remote/distance learning days used pursuant to our Continuous Learning Plan) when a student is receiving services in a homebound setting. Changes to the IEP related to a safer service delivery method during school closures and re-entry may be considered by the CCC at these 60 day reconvenes.

Special Transportation

If a student is being provided in-person services and requires transportation, then the IEP will reflect this service. An administrator will collaborate with the school transportation director to implement a busing plan that meets social distancing recommendations (including pick-up, in-transit, and drop off).

Therapy

By following the provision of IEP-required therapies, our corporation may implement the following:

- Intensified cleaning and disinfecting of equipment and surfaces between therapy sessions
- Class and therapy group size reductions, staggered (alternate days/rotation) scheduling and/or spaced seating to facilitate physical distancing, restricted sharing of equipment/learning aids.
- Instruction about and observance of frequent handwashing and face covering recommendations.
- Remote/distance therapy needs, including assistive technology, as necessary, for special student populations who cannot yet safely return to congregate settings.
- Contingency planning to continue services if COVID-19 transmission requires intermittent or extended school building closures.
- Technology training and access for therapists to serve medically fragile students, such as those who are ventilator-dependent and have tracheostomies.

- Flexible and adaptive scheduling to maximize therapy service provision despite personnel shortages, staff illness/isolation, and limited access to students.

Classroom Environment

Each Western school will address modifications to the classroom on a building-by-building and classroom-by-classroom basis. If restrictions are needed, Western schools may:

- Increase space between student desks, tables, etc.;
- Face desks in the same direction;
- Use assigned seating arrangements;
- Encourage educational activities that keep students seated in the classroom;
- Limit activities that combine classes or grade levels;
- Limit, or control, student transitions from room to room;
- Limit sharing of high touch materials (art supplies, equipment, etc);
- Avoid sharing of electronic devices;
- Increase opportunities for student hygiene activities;
- Encourage the use of outdoor spaces for instruction;
- Encourage the use of larger classroom spaces (gym, cafeteria, etc).; and
- Schedule restroom breaks to avoid overcrowding

Field Trips During the School Day

Western School Corporation will reinstate field trips for the 2023-2024 school year. Field trips are at the discretion of the building principal.

Cafeterias, Common Areas, Offices, and Hallways

Each Western school will address modifications to cafeterias, common areas, and hallways based on need. Adjustments if needed may include; additional lunch periods, staggered lunch periods and additional eating areas will also be utilized, as well as staggering classes when possible in the hallways.

Cafeteria and Food Service

Students will eat lunch by grade level (grades K-8) and as scheduled for the high school, and social distancing guidelines may be encouraged. Each building will utilize additional spaces outside of the cafeteria as needed to allow students space.

Western schools may:

- Eliminate self-serve food items;
- Eliminate communal access to napkins and silverware;
 - Napkins and silverware will be provided and will be disposable.
- Serve medically fragile students separately from other students;
- Reduce seating capacities at lunch tables to promote social distancing;
- Prohibit food-sharing;
- Discourage cash transactions;
- Ensure personnel handling cash do not also handle food;
- Schedule handwashing for students and employees prior to food service times;
- Provide access to hand sanitizer;
- Use floor markings and various signage to indicate appropriate social distancing for student lines;

- Require food service personnel to wear personal protective equipment including masks while preparing and serving food; and
- Install engineering controls such as sneeze guards in cafeteria serving lines.
- Students who require their teeth to be brushed after eating will visit a designated area which will be disinfected after each use.

Additional School Procedures and Protocols

Western schools may:

- implement measures to decrease students congregating in one location by doing the following:
 - Use directional signage to indicate walk patterns;
 - Use signage to promote social distancing;
 - Schedule restroom breaks to avoid overcrowding and limit the number of students in a restroom at one time;
 - Rearrange furniture to avoid clustering of students;
 - Use floor markings as needed to promote social distancing
 - Limit students to sections of the playground and a daily rotation.
- Western will require parties renting building spaces for an activity to comply with all of Western's health protocols.
- Post lowered, revised maximum occupancy numbers.
- Promote social distancing through ongoing verbal messaging.
- Schedule students to be dropped off and picked up at specific times and locations determined by each individual building.
- Implement measures to decrease employees congregating in one location.
- Limit usage of the staff/teacher's lounge.
- Encourage remote meetings when possible.
- Make alternate plans for whole staff gatherings.
- Rearrange workstations to encourage social distancing.
- Use assigned seating when possible.
- Use sign-in sheets for in-person meetings to document attendees.
- Keep accurate records of any persons other than students and staff entering the building, their reason for entering, and the locations in the building to which they travel.
- Restrict vendor access to the school to times when students are not present.

Extracurriculars and Co-curriculars

- Face coverings are not required
- Athletic teams will follow guidance given by the the IHSAA
- Other curricular activities will follow the aforementioned information.
- Prior to participation, all first-time student athletes are required to have an IHSAA pre-participation physical for the upcoming school year.
- All students and staff should self-screen for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating in workouts, rehearsals, or practices.
- Individuals must wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating. If this is not possible, hand sanitizer will be available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Water fill stations will be available. Individuals should bring their own drink from home or water bottle to refill at one of the water fill stations. Water bottles will also be available to

those who need one.

- Concessions will be open, if applicable

Transportation

Staff will inspect all buses and transport vehicles for cleanliness and safety before and after routes. Effective February 27, 2022 face coverings/masks are no longer required on public school buses.

General transportation Services

- At the time of enrollment, parents will notify WSC of their intention to use school bus transportation to and/or from school
- WSC bus drivers will contact parents to inform them of their student(s) specific bus arrangements
- Students will be assigned a single school bus number, bus stop, and possibly a seat
- If needed, bus seat assignments will be designated on a “bus stop basis” meaning students will be grouped together in bus seats
- Students will not be permitted to change bus arrangements
 - If a parent/guardian needs to change a child’s transportation method on a given day, s/he will only be allowed to change to a car rider. Students are not permitted to switch to a different bus as all seats are assigned ahead of time in an effort to limit student contact as well as enhance contact tracing, if necessary
- Students may be required to remain in their assigned seats for the duration of the school bus trip. All students must remain facing forward and remain seated. Failure to comply with seating requirements will result in the loss of bus privileges for a student
- Transfer students will be given assigned bus stops and seats if possible
- Buses will be filled as minimally as possible with ideally no more than 2 students per seat

Modifications for Extracurricular Transportation Services

The following lists potential requirements to WSC’s extracurricular transportation services:

- Encourage custodial or arranged, reimbursable transportation for McKinney-Vento, foster, and medically fragile students decided by a case conference committee
- Assign drivers to a single bus and/or a specific route and establish consistent driver assignments for extracurricular activities
- Assign students to a single bus and to a specific seat
- Reinforce social distancing whenever possible and;
- Failure to comply with seating requirements will result in the loss of bus privileges for a student.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up

For the safety of everyone, all drivers will remain in their vehicles and students will be loaded and unloaded on the curbside by Western staff without crossing traffic or vehicles. Maps of the changes specific to each building will be communicated.

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors and volunteers are allowed in school buildings. The building principal reserves the right to deny any visitor or volunteer access to the building. Principals will closely monitor the amount of people in and out of the building.

Personnel and Service Vendors

Western School Employees

The following procedures and guidelines are required.

Safety Procedures and Protocols

All Western School Employees will:

- Follow social distancing guidelines whenever possible;
- Facilitate the cleaning of student desks, tables, and other high-touch areas prior to the new student groups entering the classroom (Teachers and Aides);
- Provide access to hand sanitizer;
- Promote social distancing and healthy hygiene practices;
- Adhere to the Western's Health Protocols outlined above;
- Address all existing employment functions outlined within job description; and
- Adhere to all Western existing policies and procedures.

Custodial and Maintenance Staff will:

- In addition to the requirements for all employees, will prioritize the cleaning of high-touch areas throughout the school building.

Food Service Staff will:

- In addition to the requirements for all employees, will prioritize the cleaning of high-touch areas throughout school kitchen and cafeteria area;
- Complete all necessary, ongoing professional development training regarding meal preparation and serving.

Bus Drivers will:

- In addition to the requirements for all employees, will prioritize the cleaning of high-touch areas school bus;
- Facilitate the cleaning of school bus seats and high-touch areas prior to the start of each bus trip.
- All transportation personnel will complete all necessary, ongoing professional development training regarding school bus transportation services.

Service Vendors and Outside Providers will:

- Follow social distancing guidelines whenever possible;
- Promote social distancing and healthy hygiene practices;
- Adhere to the WESTERN's Health Protocols outlined above; and
- Adhere to all WESTERN's existing policies and procedures.

Professional Development

All Western staff, student-teachers, and substitute teachers may complete professional development training regarding COVID-19 symptoms and screening, prevention techniques, and student and non-student healthy hygiene protocols prior to working with students in the school building.

Professional Development Training

Western may provide professional development training to address the following topics related to COVID-19.

- Western Health Protocols as outlined above including;
 - Hygiene expectations and general day-to-day healthy practices;
 - The appropriate methods, tools, and products for cleaning surfaces and other high-touch areas;
 - General occupational safety trainings including the location of eye wash stations, AED, first-aid supplies, etc.;
 - Universal precautions when handling bodily fluids; and
 - Proper handling techniques for higher-risk items (waste bins, trash bags, etc.).

Professional Development Training

- Online Trainings and Resources
- Zoom Trainings
- Webinars
- Professional Learning Communities
- Small Group Meetings

Mitigation Strategies

Western will continue to work closely to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students, staff and teachers. School officials will maintain direct lines of communication with the Howard County Health Department liaison to ensure consultation and expertise is readily available. The Howard County Health Department may not agree with all mitigation strategies set forth by the School Corporation.

Although evidence shows that most children infected with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, some children will develop serious illness, especially those children at risk because of underlying health issues. Also, Western personnel who are 65 years and older or who have underlying health conditions are encouraged to consult with a health care provider.

Recommendations about prolonged closure will depend on the level of cohorting the school has been adhering to, the community level of disease, and the current burden of infection impacting area hospital systems.

Custodial Cleaning Plan and Procedures

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfection is an important part of reopening Western School Corporation that will require careful planning. It is everyone's responsibility to slow the spread of the virus through social distancing and prevention hygiene, such as frequently washing your hands.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can be killed if using the right products and procedures. The EPA has compiled a list of disinfectant products that can be used against COVID-19, including ready-to-use sprays, concentrates, and wipes. Each product has been shown to be effective against viruses that are harder to kill than viruses like the one that causes COVID-19.

This document provides a general framework for cleaning and disinfection practices. The framework is based on doing the following:

1. DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED.

Dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Routinely disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily. Areas unoccupied for 7 or more days need only routine cleaning. Maintain existing cleaning practices for outdoor areas.

2. DETERMINE HOW AREAS WILL BE DISINFECTED.

CLEAN VISIBLY DIRTY SURFACES WITH SOAP AND WATER prior to disinfection.

3. USE THE APPROPRIATE CLEANING OR DISINFECTANT PRODUCT.

Use an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19, and read the label to make sure it meets your needs.

4. ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS ON THE LABEL.

The label will include safety information and application instructions. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children.

5. PRIORITIZE DISINFECTING FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES.

Consider the type of surface and how often the surface is touched. Prioritize disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

Examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection following reopening are: • tables, • doorknobs, • light switches, • countertops, • handles, • desks, • phones, • keyboards, • toilets, • faucets and sinks

6. CONSIDER THE RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED.

Keep in mind the availability of cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for cleaners and disinfectants.

7. CONTINUE ROUTINE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION.

Continue or revise your plan based upon appropriate disinfectant and PPE availability. Utilize up-to-date information provided by the CDC, WHO, and local health officials on best practices.

[Link to CDC Guidelines](#)

8. CONTINUE PRACTICES THAT REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR EXPOSURE.

Maintain social distancing, staying six feet away from others. Reduce sharing of common spaces and frequently touched objects. Maintain safe practices such as frequent handwashing, using cloth face coverings, and staying home if you are sick.

9. CONSIDER SHIFTING CUSTODIAL HOURS TO MEET CLEANING NEEDS.

Custodial hours will be shifted to help maintain routine, supplemental, and emergency cleaning.

1. Routine cleaning is performed on a regularly scheduled basis by district custodial staff assigned to that building or area. Routine cleaning includes daily cleaning and disinfecting of all restrooms, scheduled sweeping of all floors, sanitizing of cafeteria tables, emptying trash and other building based tasks.
2. Supplemental cleaning is performed by custodial staff over and above what is considered routine. Supplemental cleaning is focused on cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces, specifically for the purpose of preventing spread of disease
3. Emergency cleaning: The emergency cleaning plan will be implemented at the direction of the Superintendent or designee in response to an actual infection located at or attributed to a particular school or location or when directed by County or State health authorities.

10. UTILIZE SUPPLEMENTAL CLEANING WITH ALL STAFF

Teachers and support staff may participate in supplemental cleaning and disinfecting high traffic areas and frequently touched surfaces.

1. Supplemental cleaning is focused on cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces, specifically for the purpose of preventing spread of disease.
2. Examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need cleaning and disinfection following reopening are: tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks, and personal work areas

11. CLEANING AND DISINFECTING YOUR BUILDING OR FACILITY IF SOMEONE IS SICK.

1. Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
2. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
3. Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and controls.
4. If more than 7 days since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary.
 - a. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

Custodial Checklist

Room # / Location _____
 Initials _____

Date _____

DAILY CLEANING DUTIES	MO N	TU E	WE D	TH U	FR I
Restrooms (All public and employee):					
Clean, sanitize fixtures, horizontal surfaces and surrounding areas					
Clean, sanitize toilets and sinks					
Clean, sanitize stall doors and hardware					
Empty wastebaskets - (sanitize exterior, change liners if needed)					
Stock dispensers - (sanitize exterior)					
Replace fresheners as needed					
Sweep and wet mop floors					
Clean mirrors					
Other:					
Classrooms/Office Areas:					

Clean, sanitize door knobs, fixtures, desks, horizontal surfaces, high contact areas					
Empty wastebaskets (disinfect exterior, change liners as needed)					
Sweep and wet mop floors					
Vacuum high traffic areas					
Clean, sanitize sinks and tables					
Change light bulbs					
Other:					
Hallway and other non-classroom areas:					
Drinking fountains - clean and sanitize					
Clean, sanitize handrails, door knobs and fixtures					
Clean, sanitize entry windows, doors, and hardware					
Vacuum high traffic carpets/rugs					
Spot clean low traffic carpets/rugs as needed					
Dry / wet mop floor / scrub floor					
Other:					
WEEKLY CLEANING DUTIES					
Clean, sanitize restroom vertical surfaces (especially near fixtures)					
Spot clean, sanitize classroom walls/vertical surfaces					
Spot clean hallway walls and cove base/vertical and horizontal surfaces					
Spot clean and vacuum low traffic carpets/rugs					
Dust desks, countertops, and office furniture					
Dust window sills and surrounding areas					
Clean kitchen sinks					
Sweep walkways, decks, and stairways					

Remove mineral deposits in sinks, toilets urinals					
Hallway, classroom, and restroom vertical and horizontal surfaces					
Change lightbulbs in nonessential areas (daily if essential)					
Other:					
QUARTERLY CLEANING DUTIES					
Deep clean restroom floors and walls with ultra clean vac					
Dust air vents					
Drain maintenance					
Dust light fixtures					
Other:					
BREAK CLEANING DUTIES (Spring, Fall, Winter)					
Change classroom air filters					
IMPORTANT ATTENTION					
Vandalism: (Remove or report within 24 hours)					
Fixtures: (Report any non-working within 24 hours)					

Indiana Department of Education Resources

[COVID-19 Resources for Indiana Schools](#)

Indiana State Department of Health

[Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Public Resources](#)

References

Indiana Department of Education's reopening framework entitled, "[Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools \(IN-CLASS\)](#)"